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INL sharpshooters dominate national competition

IDAHO FALLS -- INL Protective Force member Jay Blake captured top individual honors in the nation at the Security Protection Officers Training Competition (SPOTC), a national shooting contest for security officers held June 1-5 in Albuquerque, N.M. Teammates Bryan Cook, Colt Green and Brad Hammer placed third, eighth and 18th respectively as INL dominated the individual competition while taking fifth overall in the SPOTC team competition.

The five-day competition consisted of a series of grueling events that combine strength, endurance and sharpshooting tests featuring handgun, rifle and automatic weapons used in a variety of scenarios and conditions. All the events are combat style, with the competitors running and/or doing other physical activity between shooting positions. Team events are timed and the final score is based on both shooting accuracy and total time.

"I am really proud of these security officers," said Dwayne Coburn, INL director of Facilities & Site Services. "Their extraordinary skills are on display when we dominate the individual competition in a premier nationwide event such as SPOTC. In addition, to place fifth as a team against some of the best marksmen in the nation is an honor for INL. INL takes great pride in what the team achieved."

The remaining team members are Brad Hammer, Jake Jenson and Kyle Jorgensen. Jorgensen competed in the supervisor category, and placed second overall. The INL team placed fifth overall among Department of Energy security teams.

"In order to recognize the magnitude of this achievement you have to understand the level of competition," said Security & Emergency Services Director Tom Middleton. "Our INL team competed against other DOE SPOTC teams whose only job through the year is to prepare for this competition. The skill, dedication and commitment of our INL SPOTC team are unparalleled!"

Security officers and police from around the nation took part in this year's event -- considered one of the premier shooting competitions in America for professional security forces.

"Our guys have once again shown why INL continues to be recognized as an emerging world-class lab. We sent six officers to the 2008 SPOTC and had three finish in the top 10. They competed against the best of the best from DOE sites across the nation -- and they proved that INL Protective Force has a program that is second to none," said Dan Webb, INL Security Operations manager.

Terry Schwartz, INL Protective Force Services manager, was also impressed.

"It was a tremendous effort of dedicated professionalism by our team," he said. "They have re-established a proud tradition of winning and excelling on a national basis. Thanks to the current participants and all those who have contributed to their success -- past, present and future -- our future looks bright."

Doug Evancic, lead trainer for the team, is also excited. "It is an honor for me to work with a group of people who are so committed to excellence and so focused on contributing to a winning team," he said. Two other INL trainers, Bennie Cooley and Dennis Larsen, were also key contributors to the team's success.

INL is one of the DOE's 10 multiprogram national laboratories. The laboratory performs work in each of the strategic goal areas of DOE: energy, national security, science and the environment. Specifically, INL is the nation's leading center for nuclear energy research and development. Day-to-day management and operation of the laboratory is the responsibility of Battelle Energy Alliance.

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